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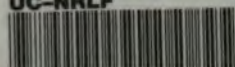
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# THE LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKSPERE

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## *Ter-Centennial Address*

By WILLARD GIBSON DAY, A. M.

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*Fac Similes of Shakspeare's Authentic Signatures, and the Title Page of His First Edition of Hamlet*

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## The Life of William Shakspeare.

ADDRESS BY WILLARD GIBSON DAY, A. M.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The journey hence to London, is, in thought, an easy one; and hardly more difficult on to Oxford, forty-six miles west of London. Thence we may go again northwest, sixty miles, by the wagon road, to the ever classic river Avon. Stratford-on-Avon is situated in a wide valley, at a ford of the river, and hence called Stratford, or Valley Ford. It is an ancient town: was three hundred years old at the time of the Norman conquest. It has now about five thousand people, old and young, and had fourteen hundred in the time of Shakspeare.

In the early days of the town, the little river let or hindered people's crossing, according to its own capricious will, until a plain, long, rumbling and uncertain wooden bridge was built. That lasted until the reign of Henry VII, when a low stone structure of fourteen pointed arches, took its place. The bridge still remains.

Approaching Stratford by the London road, there may be seen, across the river, on the west bank, the east or chancel end of Stratford Church, with its high and wide old-English chancel window. You see also the churchyard, filled with graves, extending down to the edge of the water.

Crossing the Avon, by the bridge, you turn to the left, along the nearest street, and soon you are at the entrance of the church. Then, going forward to the chancel, you see at your feet, and toward the left or north side, three graves, covered by stone slabs, and with inscriptions surmounted by coats-of-arms. The

grave nearest the middle of the church, is that of Susanna Hall, eldest daughter of William Shakspeare. Next to her's is that of her husband, Dr. John Hall, an eminent physician of Stratford. Close by the grave of Dr. Hall, is that of Thomas Nash, who married the daughter of the Halls, and thus the grand-daughter of William Shakspeare, and his last lineal descendant. Adjoining this grave, is that of the great poet. This is covered by a stone slab, on which is the now well known inscription:

"Good friend, for Iesu's sake, forbear  
To digge ye dust enclosed here:  
Blest be ye man yt spares these stones,  
And curst be he yt moves my bones."

These words alone, doggerel as they are, have, by their magic influence, kept the bones of Shakspeare in their proper resting-place in Stratford; whereas otherwise they would long since have been removed to some great corner among the less noble but mighty dead that lie buried at Westminster.

Beyond the slab that covers Shakspeare's grave, is a wider one, extending to the north wall of the church. This covers the grave of "Anne, beloved wife of Wm. Shakspeare," who died in 1623, aged sixty-seven.

Looking up from this last grave, we see immediately over it, on the left or north wall of the church, the bust of Shakspeare, taken in a sitting posture; his hands resting on a cushion before him; his left hand holding a pen. This bust was placed in its position within seven years after his death. It was made from a cast taken from the face, and though very inartistic in its details, is generally regarded as giving the most correct representation of the poet's personal appearance. It was even painted, to make it as life-like as possible: the face and hands flesh-color, the eyes hazel and the costume such as he had been accustomed to wear.

The Stratford Church is in the southern portion of the town, while in the northern part, on Henley street, is still shown the house, and even the room, where the poet was born. This event took place on the

23rd of April, 1564. It was St. George's Day; and all the military, civil and ecclesiastical officials were parading in their fullest uniforms. They passed the Shakspeare birth-place, on their way to the great elm, at the northern boundary of the town, and where they halted in their march, read portions of the Holy Scriptures, chaunted psalms, and sung hymns, led by choristers, in their white robes and surplices. There were also mimic shows, representations of St. George killing the dragon; and other holiday sports; and at every turn of the street there went up shouts that filled the air, for "St. George and merry England!"

Well were they given on that happy anniversary; for then indeed was born a man that did more for England and for us, for his mother tongue, and for mankind, than all the Georges in the calendar, and whether commons, doctors, saints, or kings!

Born of whom? Of John and Mary Shakspeare: then very plain and simple names; but now more than honorable titles. Mary Shakspeare was the daughter of Agnes Webbe and Robert Arden, son of Robert Arden, groom of the bed-chamber in the royal household of Henry VII. The Arden family trace their lineage back to the time of Edward the Confessor.

Mary Arden was a mild, amiable, lovable woman. Her father had died a year before her marriage; and left her a home, in which she lived apart from her mother and sisters; a little lonesome, perhaps, until John Shakspeare became a frequent visitor at the place. They were hardly married before she put her husband in the fullest possession of this home, and of all the other property she had.

As Mary Shakspeare came of somewhat gentle blood, John Shakspeare boasted also of his descent from a valiant soldier in the army of the Earl of Richmond, who conquered Richard III., on the field of Bosworth. So when the poet William set out to glorify the Earl of Richmond, he was partly engaged in brightening the shield of his own ancestors. And after Wm. had gained some reputation and influence in London, one of his first efforts was to have established by coat-of-



arms the right of plain John Shakspeare to write his name,—if haply had been able to write,—Magister, or Mr. John Shakspeare.

Like most of his fellow-citizens, however, poor John Shakspeare could not write his own name. So in his earlier married life, in the solid ardor of an honest flame for the lovely lady of his heart, he took the first letter of her name, A, for his sign manual. Mary Shakspeare had a little more education than her husband; and she wrote the letters M-y for her signature; and even between those two letters and the few undoubted signatures of William Shakspeare, we may see a distinctly recognizable family resemblance in handwriting. She doubtless placed the pen and held it for the crooked marks of the poet in his earliest beginnings.

Mary Arden no doubt condescended a little in her marriage with John Shakspeare, who was a pushing, enterprising, and generally miscellaneous kind of a man; one who only needed, however, the gentle support and kindly counsel of a wise and quiet wife, to become as he did become, the most prominent politician of Stratford. He climbed through all the grades of office, and finally, in 1568, became a high bailiff of the borough and chief magistrate of the town.

A great deal of ink has been wasted in the discussion of John Shakspeare's occupation; or occupations, as we should say; for he had several, chief among which we may always reckon the rearing of a large and excellent family. His most ordinary business was that of a farmer. With this he combined some town employments. He no doubt attended to the butchering of his own cattle, hogs and sheep, and bought others, to his profit. So in the representations of the poet's birth-place there is a front shop, with a butcher's stall and a sale window. There can be little doubt that meat was sold at the Henley-street residence, and by the Shakspeare family; although John Shakspeare was called a wool-stapler, in order to dignify his employment as much as possible.

It has been said that William Shakspeare was in his youth apprenticed to a butcher; but in the light of

recent discoveries that was not possible. And yet he knew all about the processes of butchering, and in a way that no man ever learns without seeing and engaging in the work. He mentions things seldom or never observed outside of a slaughter-pen. Thus, in *Hamlet*, he talks of "coagulate gore." He makes the old nurse, in "*Romeo and Juliet*," discourse of bloody deeds done by Romeo, "in blood, all in gore blood!" In *Henry V.*, he pictures the "fetlock deep in gore." And again he says, "in gore he lay ensteeped." Men see gore in a slaughter house, and hardly any where else, except in imagination. Shakspeare does not hesitate to mention a "barrow of butcher's offal;" thus indicating that he had seen butchering done, but only in a small way. And there are many other such allusions. He did not forget his early avocations even in his latest life and work. In the play of *Henry VI.*, Shakspeare makes the rebel Cade say to Dick, the butcher of Ashford, about his destruction of enemies: "They fell before thee like sheep and oxen; and thou behavedst thyself as thou hadst been in thine own slaughterhouse." Again he makes another butcher say:

"Then is sin struck down, like an ox;  
And iniquity's throat cut, like a calf."

All these illustrations show that Shakspeare had seen butchering done, and probably had often assisted his father in the work.

Mary Shakspeare took care of her own children: and it may be partly owing to this fact, under Providence, that the plague which visited the low fevery town of Stratford, in Shakspeare's infancy, did not take him to the other world, as it did one-sixth of the entire population of within six months. The doors of the houses were all marked with a red cross and the Latin words, "*Miserere, Domine!*" and the prayer itself, "Lord, have mercy upon us!" went up that year from many a sorrowing heart in that ill-fated town.

When the poet was four years old, his father was mayor of the village, and held his court sessions in a chamber of the guild; and the large-eyed, light-haired boy began with his earliest memory to take in with

wonderment the curious humors of men. Young as he was, he was a "chiel amang them."

His father was ambitious for the son's education; and his mother used her opportunities in teaching him to read. For the only school in the town was the Stratford Free Grammar School; and that could not be entered except by those who had learned to read. The poet undoubtedly first studied the A B C or "Absey Book," to which he makes allusion in the play of King John. It contained the "Pater-noster, Ave-Maria, Crede and Ten Commandments in Englyshe;" and had been published ten years before the birth of Shakspeare by John Day, a loyal churchmen, a friend learning, and a celebrated publisher who had the sole copy-right for that and several other works that were successively consumed in Shakspeare's course of education.

When the poet was six years old, the family removed to a small farm at Ingon, two miles from Stratford. John Shakspeare had rented it for eight pounds a year. William then had a good long healthy walk to his school, but which he could shorten a little by coming cross-lots over the beautiful fields of Welcombe, that lie northwest of the village, and which in his later life became his property. Here he had opportunity for his lyric observation of the spring:

"When daisies pied, and violets blue,  
And lady-smocks, all silver white,  
And cuckoo buds, of yellow hue,  
Do paint the meadows with delight!"

And here also in the bad wintry weather, he could say, in the rhythm of his homeward steps, at night:

"When icicles hang by the wall,  
And Dick, the shepherd, blows his nails,  
And Tom bears logs into the hall,  
And milk comes frozen home in pails;  
When blood is nipped and ways be foul,  
Then nightly sings the staring owl:  
To-whoo,

To-whit, to-whoo,

A merry note, while greasy Joan doth keel the pot."

Certainly lively pictures of simple homely occupations, and the plain rustic living to which the poet was accustomed.

The Free Grammar School of Stratford was a classic institution; and as the church curates who taught were better instructed in Latin than in other branches, they generally taught that to the neglect of other, perhaps more useful knowledge. Shakspeare undoubtedly studied Virgil, but was obliged to pick up geography in later life. And even then he knew so little of it that he located a sea in Bohemia; and made a love-lorn couple sail in a ship where they could only possibly have gone by overland conveyance.

A certain Thomas Hunt, curate of Ludington, was fortunate enough, perhaps, to preside over Shakspeare as the "whining school-boy;" if one could imagine that he ever did or could whine over any kind of learning. And if the young poet's metrical brain was ever lulled to sleep by the busy hum of the school, he might have gathered in his dreams the fairy information which he penned in after days, in the verse:

"I know a bank wheron the wild thyme blows,  
Where ox-lips, and the nodding violet grows,  
Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine."

While pursuing his studies in school, Shakspeare devoted himself to Wm. Lilly's grammar, which had a very attractive picture as a frontispiece: a large apple tree, with boys in the branches reaching for the fruit. No doubt young Shakspeare took his share. And the book and picture may have led him into that doubtful character of poacher, which a stupid wiseacre set down for him the generation following. These were his words: "William Shakspeare, much given to all unluckiness, in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from Sir Lucy; who oft had him whipt, and sometimes imprisoned; and at last made him fly his native country, to his great advancement. From an actor of plays he became a composer." This last sentence we may certainly endorse, with some qualification. But the other declarations were not only apocryphal but

impossible. Sir Lucy was in London, and not at all in Stratford, at the time set down for the deer-stealing business. And we can readily imagine what would have followed from the Lucys, or any of their retainers, flogging any one of stalwart John Shakspeare's curly-headed sons.

Shakspeare doubtless received much of his Bible information through the church services, which he attended in the chapel of the guild. And before the days of Cromwell the walls of this chapel were well adorned with historical and symbolical pictures. As he sat in his place, observing everything at once with his open, wide, wondering eyes, he took in the details of Becket's martyrdom, painted on one side of the room, and the inevitable retribution of the Last Judgment on the other. A picture of "the seven deadly sins" came in for their share of his sharp, youthful analysis.

His companion and friend, pedantic old Ben Johnson, had to acknowledge that Shakspeare knew some Latin and a little Greek. And this he must have learned in his early life; for the most of his classical allusions are in his earlier works. In Henry VI. he quotes a line from Virgil, familiar to every student of the *Aeneid*:

*"Tantane animis celestibus ira?"*

And he alludes, at least six times, to Aeneas, always giving the proper accent to the name, and showing that he had scanned its quantity, and under a proper instructor.

While yet a school-boy Shakspeare began his observation of royalty; the occasion being the visit of the queen Elizabeth to Sir Thomas Lucy at Charlecote; an event which stirred the society of Stratford to the depths. John Shakspeare was then chief magistrate; and at his best estate; and figured in a very enterprising manner, no doubt, on the unusual occasion. William, being the eldest son, had, perhaps, various matters committed to his attention; and the entire family of little Shaksperes may have felt themselves very necessary to the preservation of the royal realm.

But a change was to come over the hitherto happy

Shakspere household. The father has a large family to keep. He is of a liberal and generous disposition. He has been spending money too rapidly, considering their limited means. There had been already seven children; four daughters and three sons. Two of the daughters were older than the poet. It was found necessary to mortgage some property, to obtain a loan of forty pounds. But after receiving the proceeds the father is still too poor to pay his poor tax. The year following he is poorer still. The father and mother sell more property; and another son is added to the family, Edmund, who, when he grew up, followed his brother William to the stage in London.

John Shakspere absents himself from the town council, because he cannot face his creditors. Sir Thomas Lucy is appointed to find out who are disloyal to the government in not attending church; and John Shakspere assigns as his reason for absence, the fear of being arrested for debt!

William is taken from school. He helps his father in every possible calling, buying and selling cattle, butchering, or doing any other out-door work. It was said that he had been a schoolmaster in the country. If true at all, it must have been "about this time," as the almanac-makers say. He may have instructed the neighboring children at Ingon, where the Shakspere family had been living. Or, he may have gone to Shottery, and become more intimate with an excellent family that he had always known, the Hathaways,

The Hathaways were better educated than the Shaksperes were, and may have been in some way early patrons of the poet's learning. At all events an intimacy springs up between the poet, aged seventeen, and Ann Hathaway, twenty-five. The lady was represented as a beautiful woman, with dark hair and eyes, in pleasant contrast with the light auburn hair and hazel eyes of the poet. She had undoubtedly a lovely character; for her brother named his eldest daughter after her; and the Shakspere family did the same in the case of one of their younger children. She was also esteemed by others, and generally by those who

knew her; for the gardener on the Hathaway estate left in his will a small bequest for the poor of Stratford, which Miss Ann was to disburse at discretion. This simple fact goes very far toward indicating her actual character.

She undoubtedly admires Shakspeare for his "handsome, well-shapt" form, as described by the gossiping Aubrey; as perhaps also for some faint conception of his rare poetical genius. But when she finally comes to question herself closely she finds that she not only admires but loves him. She blames herself no doubt, but her love, as an advocate, soon acquits her. She may have been the inspirer of those burning stanzas entitled the "Passionate Pilgrim," written by the poet in his adolescence. For if Shakspeare ever loved a human being he loved Ann Hathaway then. She may have heard Dowland play, or sung his beautiful compositions with a sweet, soft voice that matched her charming countenance.

She might indeed have debated her love in her own heart in the words of that old English love-song:

"O was I to blame to love him?  
O was I to blame to love him?  
So gallant, so kind, I could not be blind;  
I was not to blame to love him.

"My heart it may break with its sorrow,  
'Tis lost for his sake, no complaint will I make,  
My heart it may break with its sorrow.

"O saw you yon tree's sweet blossom?  
Like me, to your sight, it fades with the blight;  
Yet blame not the love nor the blossom!

"O pride of my heart, I love thee!  
The zephyr, the sky, may alter; not I.  
I was not to blame to love thee!"

It is certain that Ann Hathaway loved Shakspeare with a will that nothing could conquer. And so it is not surprising that in this stage we find Shakspeare in the character of the "lover, sighing like a furnace,

and with a woeful ballad made to his mistress' eye-brow!"

This mutual attachment could not be kept from the keen observing eyes of the old father Hathaway, who saw in the disparity of their years disgrace for himself and his favorite daughter. She could not give her lover up; and so the father made a will, providing for all his children but one. In less than a year he died; and on proving the will, it was found that Anne Hathaway's name was never even mentioned in it.

Richard Hathaway died in July, 1582, and then perhaps the sternest opposition to Shakspeare's marriage was removed. There was doubtless some kind of betrothal or pre-contract between the lovers, such as in those days was looked upon as almost the same as a marriage.

And two of the men mentioned in father Hathaway's will, John Richardson and Fulke Sandels, are within four months, again on the court records; this time in connection with William Shakspeare. They have gone with him a day's ride on horseback, to Worcester, to become endorers for Shakspeare on his marriage bond. It is dated November 28, 1582, and allows the marriage after once asking of the banns, and with the consent "of her friends," whereas the law and custom both required three. Shakspeare had given his word, and was anxious to make it his bond, at a time when any meaner nature would have shown unwillingness, or certainly less alacrity than he did.

The lovers were married, and a little more than half a year afterward their first child, Susannah, Shakspeare's favorite daughter, was baptized. Twenty months later, twin children, Hamnet and Judith, were baptized.

About this time John Shakspeare was deprived of his alderman's gown, because of his continued absence from the sessions. The entire family was in the depths of poverty, and suffering all the most annoying disgraces of debt. What wonder then that Wm. Shakspeare, being still under twenty-one years of age, with



no trade or profession, but having a wife and three small children to provide for, beside his need to help his wretched poverty-stricken parents,—what wonder that he should determine to try the venture of his fortune in the far off city of London?

He left his native town, his home-nest, wife and children, father and mother, brothers and sisters, and all the other hearts he loved so well. We may see him take his way across that old stone bridge, that cared so little whom it separated. At the eastern end of the bridge three ways met, the middle one going to London. This he took, and journeyed on in a southeasterly direction. He crossed the steep hills that divide his native Warwickshire from Oxfordshire. He traveled on foot, for the family could not have owned a horse. He trudged through the weary stretches of barren downs that make the beautiful Woodstock Park seem like a paradise! And how refreshing would have been its legends of royal romance, the ballads of "Fair Rosamund," if he had only known of them! He must have stopped in that region tired and travel-worn, before he came, on the second day, to a resting-place at Oxford, that town of mighty learning, then in his wide-wondering eyes beyond the summit of his most classic ambition! Here he may have lingered for a day, forming a couple of new acquaintances, the Davenants, and studying the out-sides of the college buildings. He could not have gone into the great Bodleian Library, which would now fall down and worship a page, or even a single line of Shakspeare's manuscript, were it to be found,—for that library was not opened to the general public until fourteen years later. And Shakspeare was then one only of the most ordinary public, ragged, no doubt, disheartened, and suffering deeply from all the ills that adverse financial fortune can fall heir to.

Shakspeare stopped at the Crown Inn, a small and rather private tavern, kept by the very humble parents of William Davenant, Shakspeare's namesake and godson; who in his manhood was knighted and called Sir William Davenant; and for his excellent dramatic writing, "rare Sir William Davenant."

Leaving his newly-formed friends at Oxford, the youthful adventurer went on, four miles to Whatley, six more to Thetisford, five to Stocking Church, six to East Wickham, five to Bacconsfield, seven to Uxbridge, and then fifteen of the longest of all weary miles to his uncertain Mecca of London!

We may be thankful that on the journey his lodging only cost him a penny a day; for which small sum beds were furnished with clean linen. If he had traveled on horseback, his own fare would have cost him nothing, the host in that case only charging for the keep of the horse. But one foot up and one foot down was Shakspeare's way to London town. He even passed through "Bambury Cross" without the requisite of the nursery jingle with regard to the "hoss."

But what shall he do in London? What shall any man, without trade or profession, do in any large city today? If honest, he will certainly be glad to do any thing that offers. A clerkship in a grocery would have been a godsend to Shakspeare! It was not a time for him to choose an occupation mincingly. He could have attended market, and sold meats again successfully. Or, since he could write, and was therefore a "learned" man, he might have kept accounts, or perhaps drawn deeds such as he had seen in his father's office in Stratford!

But no such good place was open to Shakspeare! Luckily for us, however, theatrical companies had visited Stratford every year during the poet's youth. And a certain Thomas Green, of Stratford, had found employment in a low capacity at the Blackfriars Theatre; and thither Shakspeare went. He was admitted in the lowest capacity. It is believed and very well attested, that at first he held horses at the door of the theater. Happy horses! now certainly immortalized! Shakspeare no doubt loved and petted them; he stroked their intelligent faces, patted their beautiful necks; and they, in turn, sniffed at his curly hair, and nibbled with their sensitive lips at his ragged elbow; while the so-called masters of the noble animals applauded to the echo scenes inside the theater

which it proved the mission of the poet either to alter or abolish.

Shakspere at length becomes an actor of small parts, while as a supernumerary he helps to shift the few bungling scenes used to frame in the extravagant, ranting, peacock-strutting stars! He became universally useful about the place. And when it became his employment and duty to improve and reform the plays in use, by subtractions and additions of his' own, he gets a spanking rebuff from a talented but dissipated and declining play-wright, one Robert Greene, who warns his friends to beware of Shakspere, as one having a "tyger's heart in a player's hide." He calls Shakspere an upstart crow, adorned with Greene's and other's feathers; and who believes that he can bombast out blank verse equal to the best of us!" Time has certainly established the last supposition.

Greene died, and a year later this allusion to Shakspere found its way into print. Shakspere was very indignant over it; and so the publisher makes a very humble apology, and fully endorses Shakspere's quickly-earned but excellent reputation both as a writer and as a man.

In 1592 John Shakspere is still in the depths of debt, but William has become a shareholder in the Blackfriars Theatre. The next year he is admitted as part owner of the Globe Theater also, a play-house for summer entertainments and built without a roof. But William is unable to help his father much, because theatrical performances were prohibited on account of the plague prevailing in London.

The next year, when Shakspere was thirty years old, he began to print some of his earliest works. The poem entitled *Venus and Adonis* was published in May, 1594, and dedicated to Henry Wriothesly, Earl of Southampton. He afterwards published the second poem entitled "*The Rape of Lucrece*," and similarly dedicated. These two letters of dedication are the only Shakspere letters now in existence. Of course the then unvalued originals of these letters perished in the printing-office.

Shakspere at that time had many friends among

the nobility; and to establish himself more firmly as a well-born gentleman, and also to obtain a crumb of comfort for his debt-despairing father, he applies for a confirmation of a coat-of-arms, on the score of his great-grandfather's services as a soldier under Henry VII. The arms were granted, and John Shakspere, yeoman, was entitled to have Magister, or Mr., put before his name. But as people often forget it in writing, the Mr. had to be interlined, or written over his name, as it is now commonly found. It is fortunate for us now, that he had this small title; for it helps us to distinguish the poet's father from another John Shakspere, a shoemaker, and at that time not on any account to be called a M'ister.

In 1599 Shakspere again applies to the College-of-Arms, in the name of his father, but in his mother's right, for the arms of Robert Arden to be united with those of John Shakspere. The request was granted; and so the poet became, as we may say, doubly a gentleman; a title which, in his simple and true-souled ambition, he thoroughly delighted in. The theater was not his chosen place; nor were its associations generally those he loved the most. He was perfectly at home only with really noble men, and whether he found these among his theatrical associates or elsewhere.

During the poet's life in London, he was required to pass through nearly every kind of human suffering. First, there was his long-continued separation from his dotting family. Early in this involuntary absence, he wrote from an Italian story, translated into English, the love-filled tragedy of Romeo and Juliet. No doubt his own true heart was his ideal Romeo; and the one he never ceased to love, the true Juliet. The play presents the full-grown deep and honest love of man and woman, and not the simple, doubting, weak and tender "maiden passion" for a maid.

Shakspere's wife was eight years older than himself, and while he knew, from his own experience, all the difficulties of the situation; and while in his

own words he endorsed the general judgment of mankind, in saying, in the play of *Twelfth-Night*:

"Let ever the woman take an elder than herself,"

still there is not a particle of evidence that he ever ceased to love her. His strong attachment in his enforced absence may have begotten jealousy at times, a supposition not without some evidence. Shakspeare certainly knew full well the torturing nature of that unreasonable passion. He represented its long crescendo up to desperation in the play of *Othello*, where the fair beautiful wife is horribly and insanely murdered by the over-credulous black-a-moor husband. And then he gave its sublime diminuendo, in the beautiful denouement of the *Winter's Tale*, where the wife, long mourned as dead is brought back in quick full life to her repentant husband's doubly-loving arms.

This last play Shakspeare wrote in Stratford, after his retirement from London, and while in his own comfortable home, in the cheering presence of that faithful woman, whose highest ambition was to be at the last laid in the same grave with him. If he ever had any doubts of her, they were all dissipated when the play of the *Winter's Tale* was written.

Perhaps Anne Shakspeare had what we call now a tongue, and which she may at times have used unduly; but while the poet has taught us that a man can "smile and smile, and be a villain," he has also shown us in this play, by the character of Paulina, that an honest woman may scold somewhat heroically, and yet be something of a very angel.

No writer ever equaled Shakspeare in doing thorough hearty justice to the different varieties of woman-kind. In his early play of *Richard III.*, he represents the fickleness of a weak woman in her unsuccessful opposition to a most consummate villain man. Richard, after his interview with the Lady Anne, whom he has encountered on her way to bury her husband's body, exclaims:

"Was ever woman, in this humor woo'd?

Was ever woman in this humor won?

I'll have her; but I will not keep her long!  
 What! I, that killed her husband, and his father,  
 To take her in her heart's extremest hate,  
 With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,  
 The bleeding witness of her hatred by;  
 With God, her conscience, and these bars against me,  
 And I, no friends to back my suit withal,  
 But the plain devil and dissembling looks,—  
 And yet to win her! all the world to nothing!"

And in *Cymbeline*, one of his latest plays, he makes  
 a poor, deceived husband cry out in his bitter agony:

"Could I find out  
 The woman's part in me! For there's no motion  
 Tends to vice in man, but I affirm  
 It is the woman's part: Be it lying, note it,  
 The woman's; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;  
 Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain,  
 Nice longings, slanders, mutability,  
 All faults that may be named, nay, that hell knows,  
 Why hers, in part, or all; but rather, all;  
 For ev'n to vice  
 They are not constant, but are changing still  
 One vice but of a minute old, for one  
 Not half so old as that! I'll write against them,  
 Detest them, curse them:

Yet, 'tis greater skill  
 In a true hate, to pray they have their will:  
 The very devils cannot plague them better!"

Thus Shakspeare gives the naturally-unjust  
 thought and feeling of a deluded man against a wife  
 who is an embodiment of womanly loveliness. In his  
 maddening error he assigns a place for her to meet  
 him, and where he expects to have her killed by a ser-  
 vant, Pisanio. The husband, Leonatus, sends Imogen,  
 the wife, a letter, in which she reads these words:  
 "Take notice, that I am in Cambria, at Milford-Haven.  
 What your own love will, out of this, advise you, fol-  
 low." "Leonatus." Then Imogen:

"O for a horse with wings! Hearst thou, Pisanio?  
 He is at Milford-Haven! Read and tell me

How far tis thither. If one of mean affairs  
 May plod it in a week, why may not I  
 Glide thirther in a day?—Then, true Pisanio,  
 Who longst like me to see thy lord; who longst,  
 O let me bate,—but not like me,—yet longst,—  
 But in a fainter kind: O not like me:  
 For mine's beyond beyond,—say, and speak thick,  
 Love's counsellors should fill the bores of hearing,  
 To the smothering of the sense,—how far it is  
 To this same blessed Milford: And, by the way,  
 Tell me how Wales was made so happy as  
 To inherit such a haven: But, first of all,  
 How may we steal hence: and, for the gap  
 That we shall make in time, from our hence going  
 And return, to excuse:—but first, how get hence:  
 Why should excuse be born, or e'en begot?—  
 We'll talk of that hereafter. Prythee, speak, speak,  
 How many score of miles may we well ride  
 Twixt hour and hour?—”

Pisanio, breaking in,—

“One score, twixt sun and sun,  
 Madam's enough for you; and too much too.”

Imogen.

“Why, one that rode unto his execution, man,  
 Could never go so slow: I have heard of riding wagers  
 Where horses have been nimbler than the sands  
 That run in the clock's behalf,—But this is foolery:  
 Go: bid my woman feign a sickness: Say,  
 She'll home to her father; and provide me, instantly,  
 A riding suit, no costlier than would fit  
 A franklin's housewife—”

[Pisanio.

“Madam, you're best consider—”

Imogen.

“I see before me, man, nor here, nor here,—  
 Nor what ensues: but have a fog in them  
 I cannot look through. Away, I pray thee  
 Do as I bid thee: Ther's no more to say:  
 Accessible is none, but Milford way!”

I venture the assertion that human language does

not contain a more graphic portrayal of true ardent feminine character than that exhibited in these wonderful lines:—the intense affection, which exaggerates everything in which it has any interest; the instantaneous perception of the difficulties in the path it has chosen; the magical resolution of the difficulties encountered; and the surrender of the entire being to one dominant feeling;—not to recognize these distinguishing characteristics is to be ignorant of noble womanhood.

Shakspere could not in his own heart conceive of a thoroughly false and wicked woman; and therefore Cressida, the false one, is the most absurd creature in all his plays. He endeavors to picture a wicked mother, in the play of Hamlet; but he only succeeds in settling the blame on the unnatural uncle. Shakspere could not bear to leave the character of woman so dark as he found it in the story called the "History of Hamblet," from which he made the great drama; and so, beside greatly improving the character of the mother, he puts in also the beautiful, tender character of Ophelia.

Shakspere wrote King Lear at home, where he doubtless contrasted his own two excellent daughters,—Susannah, aged 24, and Judith, 22,—with the two ungrateful, false, and wicked creatures of the play.

In 1596 Shakspere lost his only son Hamnet, a lad of twelve years old. And in the play of King John, written soon after, we must believe that we can see the traces of the poet's own deep, fatherly sorrow; as, for example, where the mother, Constance, is made to say of her young son, Arthur, then confined in a prison that would only open at his death:

"And father Cardinal, I have heard you say  
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven.  
If that be true, then I shall see my boy again;  
For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,  
To him that did but yesterday suspire,  
There was not such a gracious creature born,—  
But now will canker sorrow eat my bud, -  
And chase the native beauty from his cheek;  
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,



And dim, and meagre, as an ague's fit;  
 And so he'll die; and, rising so again,  
 When I shall meet him in the courts of heaven  
 I shall not know him: therefore, never, never,  
 Must I see my pretty Arthur, more?"

Cardinal Pandulf.

"You hold too heinous a respect of grief."

Constance.

"He talks to me that never had a son!"

Pandulf.

"You are as fond of grief as of your child."

Constance.

"Grief fills the room up of my absent child,  
 Lies in his bed; walks up and down with me;  
 Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words;  
 Remembers me of all his gracious parts;  
 Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form.  
 Then have I reason to be fond of grief.—  
 Fare-you-well: had you such loss as I,  
 I could give better comfort than you do."

Five years after the death of this only son, Shaksper's father died, in Stratford; and there is a conjecture that Shaksper left the stage, for a season, and visited Scotland; and that this visit led to the production of *Macbeth*, which is supposed to have been written soon after.

In 1607 he attended the funeral of his brother, Edmund, who was buried from a church in London. And among the funeral charges is one of twenty shillings for ringing a knell for Edmund on the great bell of the church. William Shaksper paid the funeral bills, and would allow no "maimed rites," even if his brother had been only an indifferent and church-despised actor.

Two months later, Mrs. Hathaway, Anne Shaksper's mother, died. And the same day, Elizabeth, daughter of Dr. John and Susannah Shaksper Hall, was born. This Elizabeth proved to be the last of Shaksper's lineal descendants; for although twice

married she had no children. At her death she had the title of Lady Barnard.

Early in this year, 1608, Shakspeare returned to Stratford to remain. His own mother was in declining health. We may imagine the comfort she took in having the presence of her gifted, and even then quite celebrated son.

While spending his time in Stratford, he took care to look after both his real and personal property. He had advanced money and obtained loans for his Stratford friends while he was in London; and a part of his occupation in Stratford was to collect debts due him. In August, 1608, he brought suit against one John Addenbroke for money past due. But on Sept. 9th, Shakspeare's mother died; and the suit was held in abeyance. But early in the next year Shakspeare went on with his suit. Addenbroke absented himself, and Shakspeare sued his endorser; and a jury of his fellow-citizens gave Shakspeare the amount claimed: Six pounds for the debt, and one pound four shillings for costs. At another time, he sued a man for twenty shillings, due for corn delivered from the poet's farm, under the management of his brother, Gilbert. Shakspeare was generous in providing and giving, but he never permitted himself to be imposed upon either by his London adventurers or his Stratford friends.

In 1612 Shakspeare signed a small mortgage, to secure a deferred payment on a house purchased, and situated near the Blackfriars Theater. The mortgage was for sixty pounds. But the signature has long been of vastly greater value than the property conveyed, for it is the most authentic Shakspeare signature on record, being the only one known to have been executed by him while in perfect health.

The year following, Richard, the last of Shakspeare's brothers, died. And during the next his jovial intimate friend, John Combe, deceased, leaving Shakspeare a legacy of five pounds for old acquaintance sake. And the next year, 1616, is Shakspeare's last on earth.

Shakspeare is in Stratford, surrounded by his intimate friends and connections, taking care of his well-

earned property, yielding him £300 a year, and in actual value equal to £1,000, or say \$5,000 a year, at this present time: no great income, to be sure; but one that the poet knew was enough. He not written against money-hoarding all his life to become at the last avaricious himself.

On the 25th of January, 1616, Shakspeare wrote the first draft of his will, being at that time in perfect health. His second daughter was about to be married, and he wished to arrange his property to suit the changing circumstances. Fifteen days later Judith was married to Mr. Thomas Quiney, vintner. On the 25th of the next month, February, Shakspeare re-writes his will, putting in sundry affectionate remembrances of his wife, and of his most intimate friends. Two other months went by, and the everlasting bard, the poet of all time, had passed to his final account. He died on his fifty-second birthday; thus making April 23rd more the Shakspeare than the St. George's Day. He was buried on the anniversary of his baptism, April 26th, and near the altar where he had been baptized.

An enthusiastic friend of royalty attempted to praise Shakspeare by saying that he might even have been a king! So he might! But where's the king that could have filled up Shakspeare's place, in the history of the world, or in the hearts of humankind? Earth, in her most lavish mood, could never be extravagant enough to waste so great a poet in a politician or a king!

Shakspeare's personal characteristics have been well set forth by his contemporary actors and friends. Although devoted to his work, he cared less to be a poet than to be a gentleman; and though he always held the mirror so that Nature could easily see herself, yet he never wrote a line designed to injure a human being,—to wound a heart or to exalt a vice. There are plain, common, honest English expressions; but only such as the situation required. Ben Jonson well said of him: "He was indeed honest, and of a free and open nature; had an excellent fantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions." "He was a hand-

some, well-shapt man," says Aubrey, "very good company, and of a ready, smooth and pleasant wit." "Distinguished for uprightness in dealing, and a facetious grace in writing," said Chettle, in his apology. "The best in tragedy and comedy," said Meres, when Shakspeare had only written the first and poorest dozen of his plays.

Shakspeare's ability was not that acquired by study. He lacked both education and discipline. But he had that which covered and kept out of sight all minor deficiencies. His genius was the crowning example of all true genius, the grand capacity for unselfish, noble inspiration. For heaven ever broods over the world, and where it finds a human being empty of himself, it fills him with its blessing. Shakspeare's capacity was like a cavern of mighty echoes; and the one God of Revelation, Truth and Nature, swelled him to his mental utmost! The poet's very soul was prolific; and it both increased and adorned whatever it touched.

Shakspeare's methods, or habits in writing, have been indicated by his contemporary actors, Heming and Condell, who were also the editors of the first complete edition of Shakspeare's works. They said of him: "His mind and hand went together; and what he thought, he uttered with such easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." Ben Johnson said that Shakspeare claimed, that "whatever he wrote, he never blotted a line." But Johnson said again, that "Shakspeare's mind and manners were reflected in his well-turned and true-filed lines." The fact is no doubt that his thought ran on in his writing, like bright and glowing molten metal, burning and irresistible, but which he afterwards hammered and filed, when it had cooled sufficiently for him to touch.

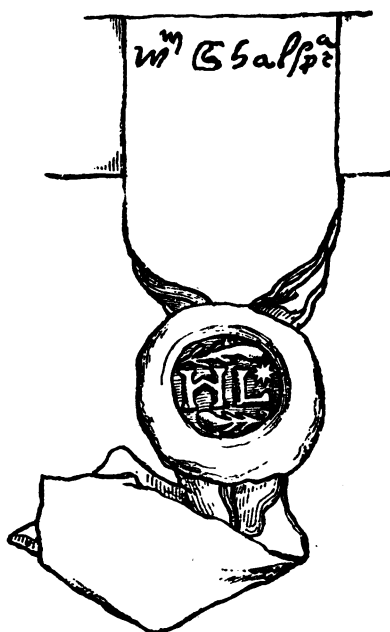
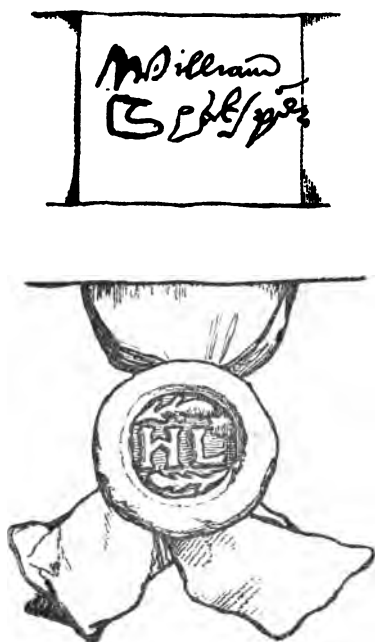
Shakspeare studied man and nature; and he wrote, not second-hand, but from his own feeling, observation, and experience. His plots were picked up from all that he had learned in history, biography, or story. But the characters were thoroughly the coinage of his own fertile brain. As Walter Scott dined in the Caledonian inns to learn humanity, and Hawthorne

watched the crowds hurrying into and out of the Boston post-office to fill his repertoire of characters, so Shakspeare and Ben Johnson, according to Aubrey, "took the humours of men wherever they came." Falstaff was a growth, and the result of several characters. Bardolf, Sly, Fluellen, Herne, Horne, Page Ford, and others, were the familiar names of Stratford inhabitants.

Of his thirty-seven well authenticated plays, thirty-one had certainly been given to the world, on the stage or in print, during Shakspeare's life-time. But there is not a particle of evidence to show that he ever saw his own *Macbeth*, or *Cymbeline*, *Timon of Athens*, *Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar*, or *Coriolanus*, either in print or acted out. These six plays were first presented to mankind in the Heming and Condell first folio edition, published in 1623, seven years after their author's death, and the same year that the body of the excellent wife, Anne Shakspeare, was laid beside that of her husband.

The man who held horses at the door of the Blackfriars Theatre, and soon after received the contemptuous names of "Shake-scene," and "Joannes Factotum," never expected to earn the title of the King of Poets! But his was not first case where the Almighty has chosen a lowly worker for a miraculous work. Shakspeare stands now in his colossal greatness, like the Pyramids in the Egyptian desert, or like a lofty mountain rising straight up from the level sea! His human kindness hovers over us like the shadow of a great rock that keeps away from the lowly grass and unpretentious flowers the hot and garish sun! He is not dead. He lives in the lives of men; in the love and truth embodied in his works. And when his Saxon race has gone; his native English tongue forgotten, and the scrolls of worldly volumes mouldered in the dust of silent ages, this truth and love will breathe upon the bones of Nature, and the soul of Britain's immortal bard will, like its fabled Arthur, the noble King, return, and again revive the dying world to unknown higher ascents of honor, power and manhood!

William Shalpsen



William Shalpsen

Wm. Shalpsen  
 By Wm. Shalpsen

T H E  
Tragicall Historie of  
HAMLET  
*Prince of Denmarke*

By William Shakeſpeare

As it hath beene diuerſe times acted by his Highneſſe ſer-  
uants in the Cittie of London : as alſo in the two V-  
niuerſities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elſe where



At London printed for N. L. and Iohn Trundell.  
1616.

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